(a) whether Government is aware that officials in Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes worth lakhs of rupees to provide contracts to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Limited as reported in print media on 16th February, 2008;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether transparency does not exist in awarding railway contracts to private/foreign companies;

(d) if so, whether an inquiry would be conducted and involved officials be held responsible; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a news item was reported in 'The Statesman' dated 16th February, 2008. The news item mentioned that between 2001 and 2005, officials in the Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes of at least $ 137,200 (about Rs. 55 lakh) to provide contracts for procurement of high friction composite brake blocks to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Ltd., a subsidiary of Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corporation (Wabtec), USA. The Newspaper further reported that Wabtec acknowledged to US Justice Department of such improper payments.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. Transparency does exist. The allegations reported in the news item are being investigated by the Departmental Vigilance.

Funds for rail projects of Andhra Pradesh

920. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry had received the proposal from Andhra Pradesh Government for enhancing the allocation of funds in the Railway Budget, 2007-08 in favour of some on-going railway projects;

(b) if so, the complete details of each such proposal;

(c) the amount of allocations enhanced for each of these on-going projects indicating the status of progress made on each of these projects;

(d) if fund allocations have not been increased, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when these projects are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two letters dt. 7.12.2007 & 10.1.2008 respectively have been received from Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for allocation of sufficient funds for the construction of new lines between Kotipalli-Narsapur, Nandyal-Yerraguntla, Kakinada-Pithapuram, Macherla-Nalgonda, Munirabad-Mahaboobnagar and Gadwal-Raichur.

(c) The details of funds allocated to the mentioned Projects are as under:—

Name of the Project	Budget Outlay 2008-09 (Rs. in Crore)	Current Status
1	2	3
Nandyal-Yerraguntla (126 km.)	35.00	656 hectare out of 680 hectare land has been acquired and earthwork, bridge work, ballast collection has been taken up.

1	2	3
Kotapalli-Narsapur (57.21 km.)	0.1	Part detailed estimate under scrutiny and land acquisition taken up.
Kakinada-Pithapuram (21.5 km.)	0.1	Requisite clearances awaited.
Macherla-Nalgonda (92 km)	2.00	Final location survey completed.
Munirabad-Mahaboobnagar (246 km.)	5.00	Yeramaras-Yadalapur (14.5 km) commissioned. On Munirabad-Yermaras, land acquisition taken up. On Krishna-Mehboobnagar (Devarkadra) (64.15 km) section, earthwork, major and minor bridges taken up.
Gadwal-Raichur (58.80 km.)	25.00	On Gadwal end, entire land in Andhra Pradesh from 58.8 to 22.40 km. taken over from Revenue Department except house in Alwalpad village. On Raichur end also, land acquisition has been taken up. Earthwork, bridges, minor bridges, ROB/RUBs and ballast collection taken up.

(d) and (e) The funds could only be enhanced for some of the projects as per the availability of resources. Nandyal-Yerraguntla new line has been targeted for completion during 2008-09. For other, no target has been fixed. The projects would be completed depending upon the overall availability of resources.

Captive power generation plant

921. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the electrified (traction) network of Railways carry 63 per cent of total freight and 48 per cent of passenger traffic;

(b) whether the Railways have been sourcing power for traction from State Electricity Boards and Central generating agencies like NTPC;

(c) whether the Railways have plants to fund and support a captive power generation plant for more assured power supply at lower unit cost; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. The electrified network of Indian Railways carried 62.8% of total freight traffic and 49.7% of passenger traffic in 2006-07.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Railways have formed a new company namely "Bhartiya Rail Bijlee Corporation Limited" in joint venture with NTPC for the said purpose. This plant will be of 1000 MW capacity and will be set up in Nabinagar, district Aurangabad in Bihar. The total